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TILES AND TILE MAKING.

TILES have become so much a part of the decorative accessories of our houses, that an interest in the mode of their manufacture, and a willingness to read anything that satisfies a natural curiosity concerning the process of their "being," has prompted many excellent articles in various magazines and papers, all of which have treated the artistic side in an exhaustive and comprehensible manner, but were disposed to pass over the mechanical, and possibly less interesting phase.

That tiles are made of mud and dirt, and other uninviting substances, is familiar to every one, but every one does not stop to consider that this mud is clay of a particular kind, and must go through a process of cleansing, rinsing, mashing and washing that compares very well with the treatment of gold quartz or gold sand, and all this before the clay is properly rid of the sand and gravel that made up a goodly portion of its bulk.

In order to wash the clay it is dissolved in immense vats of water, from which it is poured through a very fine sieve (frequently made of silk), which catches and retains all the grosser particles, permitting the finer to pass through with the water into a second vat. Here, as it solidifies, it is mixed with the necessary coloring matter, and the pasty mass, smooth and free from grit, after being treated with certain chemicals to insure an even contraction in firing, is ready for a second boiling the object of which is to make the assimilation of the coloring material with the clay more complete. After this repeated baking the mass is crushed and mangled into small lumps, and these, passed between powerful rollers, reduce it to a dust or powder which runs down through channels or pipes to the pressing room.

In this place the dust is put under presses having dies upon them for the various shaped tiles, and the tremendous force exerted makes the piece solid and substantial. After a thorough drying, these tiles, placed in a box known as a "sagger," are shoved into the kiln for a new process of heating, which lasts from six to ten days, and is expected to finish it up so far as the plain, ordinary body is concerned.

Those tiles to be glazed are dipped into a liquid, and sent through a smaller kiln known as a "muffler," from which they emerge coated with the hard permanent gloss familiar to us.

A flat plate upon the press receives the colors of the design, which is made by placing upon this plate sheets of metal (generally brass), with a certain portion of the desired design cut through each. Upon these brass sheets colored clays are sprinkled and pressed down, by which they are made to adhere to the plate beneath; succeeding sheets, each with some other portion of the design cut through it in the same way, are used in turn, each having a different colored clay dusted through its open spaces, this operation being repeated as many times as there are different colors, until finally all the colors have been applied, each through its special plate. This accumulation of colors is pressed down, and covered with the clay desired for the body of the tile, and pressed once more, then to be lifted out an entire and perfectly shaped ornamented tile. The firing of the tile then brings out more forcibly the coloring of the pattern.

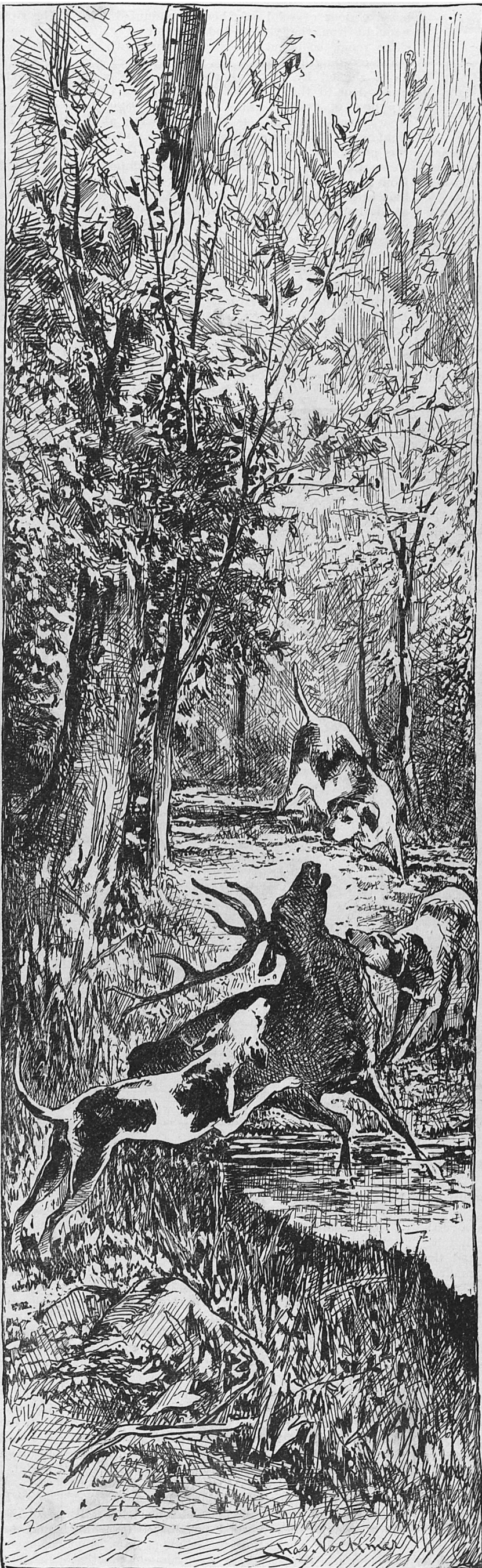
This is the process necessary to make a tile, as we see it, and this short description of its complicated, or rather its laborious mode of manufacture, may be new and of interest.

PANEL FOR SIDE OF GRATE.

THE panel shown in the illustration upon this page, is intended as a companion piece to that given in our November issue, and may be treated in a similar manner as was there directed. The design is from the pencil of Mr. Charles Volkmar.

Some of the neatest devices in the way of advertising circulars that have come to our attention, have been a series of perfumery bottles in paper, bearing the firm's name and that of the cologne with which the bottle is scented. Drawing the cork reveals a tiny landscape, with paper trees and fountains, and children and summer houses, all of which, following the cork from the bottle, spread themselves out to such a size as to make it a matter of surprise how they ever came from so small a place. Besides being a pretty souvenir, the ingenuity displayed is remarkable.

A black lily is the most fashionable—and most expensive—of naturalistic crazes.



HOME HINTS.

In Vienna feather-fans the style now is to have figures and designs formed from the neck feathers of tropical birds. The most brilliant effects are obtained in the display of Cupids and Watteau patterns. Large dark green, black or cream-colored feathers serve as a background and set off the work in the small feathers admirably.

The popularity of skin rugs was demonstrated a few days since at an auction sale in London, where ten thousand China grey goat rugs sold at excellent prices.

Silk has never been thoroughly popular for the minor household purposes on account of its expense, and its uses have been necessarily curtailed in this direction. It is now proposed, however, to create a "boom" in silk table-cloths and it is claimed, with the fairly low price at which silk is quoted, that a remarkably handsome table-cover may be gotten up at a cost not very much in excess of brocaded linen and the materials now generally used.

A firm in London has gotten out some very neat and entirely original designs in New Year's cards. This industry—or possibly it may be termed a feature—has become a most expensive one for manufacturers, though probably most remunerative as well. The large sums expended by several American houses in this direction are familiar to everyone, and the firm referred to above has offered and paid \$25,000 in prizes for these things. This sort of thing certainly encourages and improves art, and the results please and entertain the public.

It is pleasant to note an encouragement of home talent at all times, and particularly is it so when that talent runs in a channel parallel with the accepted industries of the Old World, and equals the work of those we have been accustomed to class as masters in their particular art. It must have been with a feeling of confidence in the ability of American artists that Mr. Vanderbilt gave an order in this country for his tapestries and wall hangings. Completed, these draperies are said to be perfect in their artistic merits and in their general effect, and it may be considered a successful trial of competition with foreign products which it is hoped will encourage others to try it as well.

According to the London *Caterer*, too much care cannot be exercised in selecting flowers for the dining table. The overpowering odor, though in an adulterated quantity it may be delicious, is often destructive of all pleasure or enjoyment to be derived from the palatable viands, and strains, possibly, upon the nerves of some sensitive natures averse to the pungency of a collection of sweet scents.

The reign of the spinning wheel, like that of the sunflower, is at an end. These useless pieces of lumber, good for nothing at all, ungainly and gawky in appearance, are now being taken up into the garret if in the country, or thrown down cellar if in the city. The yards of colored ribbons that have adorned these whims are made over into dolls dresses, and the cotton plant that cost so much time and money to get from a genuine Southern plantation, is cast carelessly to the wind. It is said that even the second-hand dealers find no use for these things, and they are as energetically ignored as they used to be assiduously cultivated.

The *Evening Post* says: "In an esthetic kitchen pretty china is displayed on the shelves, Japanese baskets, fans and plates hang on the walls, and an oil-cooking stove stands on a box which is curtained off with 'Patience' chintz, and holds 'all' the utensils required for esthetic culinary art. An ornamental dressing case holds the groceries, and a charming little plate-glass wardrobe, market-basket, tea-towels, etc. A closed washstand, ornamented with Minton tiles, is used for washing dishes and work of that kind. But the kitchen requires an esthetic cook, with a 'Patience' wardrobe and a sweet voice."

Kensington carpets are new substitutes for rugs, specially adapted to parquet floors. They are made of medium rug size, and are not so costly but they may be indulged in by the majority of people.

It is said that ruby is to be a favorite color this Fall for both decorations and personal attire. Golden brown also has some pretensions to recognition, and either will make a most pleasing appearance.